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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/809,302	03/16/2001	Masahito Obata	204489US-2	5436
22850	7590	12/28/2005	EXAMINER	
OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C. 1940 DUKE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			LAMB, TWYLER MARIE	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2622	

DATE MAILED: 12/28/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/809,302

Applicant(s)

OBATA, MASAHIITO

Examiner

Twyler M. Lamb

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 09 August 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-32 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-32 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Withdrawal of Finality

1. Applicant's request for reconsideration of the finality of the rejection of the last Office action is persuasive and, therefore, the finality of that action is withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) and the Intellectual Property and High Technology Technical Amendments Act of 2002 do not apply when the reference is a U.S. patent resulting directly or indirectly from an international application filed before November 29, 2000. Therefore, the prior art date of the reference is determined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

3. Claims 1-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Obata et al. (Obata) (US 6,233,000).

The applied reference has a common Inventor and Assignee with the instant application. Based upon the earlier effective U.S. filing date of the reference, it constitutes prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102(e). This rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) might be overcome either by a showing under 37 CFR 1.132 that any invention

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disclosed but not claimed in the reference was derived from the inventor of this application and is thus not the invention "by another," or by an appropriate showing under 37 CFR 1.131.

With regard to claims 1, 10 and 19, Obata discloses an image forming apparatus (digital copier 1), comprising: a pattern detecting device (pattern detection unit 50) configured to detect whether or not a pattern is constructed with a lengthwise line of a single dot width on a basis of a pattern of respective multi-value data of a target pixel and circumferential pixels adjacent thereto in a main scanning direction (col 6, lines 53-64); and a printing device (optical writing unit 80) configured to print size-reduced printing dots of said lengthwise line of the single dot width detected by said pattern detecting device (col 9, line 57 – col 10, line 4; col 14; line 63 – col 15, line 11; col 15, lines 31-42; col 20, lines 11-27).

With regard to claims 2, 11 and 20, Obata discloses wherein said pattern detecting device further detects whether or not the pattern is constructed with an edge of a lengthwise line of a plural dot width on a basis of the pattern of the respective multi-value data of the target pixel and the circumferential pixels adjacent thereto in the main scanning direction (col 9, line 57 – col 10, line 61) and said printing device further prints size-reduced printing dots of said lengthwise line of the plural dot width detected by said pattern detecting device (col 9, line 57 – col 10, line 4; col 14, line 63 – col 15, line 11; col 15, lines 31-42; col 20, lines 11-27).

With regard to claims 3, 12 and 21, Obata discloses wherein said pattern detecting device judges whether or not said constructed lengthwise line is of the single

dot width or of a plural dot width, when pixels neighboring right and left of the target pixel are white or black and the target pixel is halftone or black (col 9, line 57 – col 10, line 4).

With regard to claims 4, 13 and 22, Obata discloses wherein said printing device shortens a dot width so as to bring neighboring dots into contact with each other when printing is done with the size-reduced printing dot of the lengthwise line of the plural dot width (col 9, line 57 – col 10, line 61).

With regard to claims 5, 14 and 23, Obata discloses wherein said printing device shortens a dot width so as to bring neighboring dots into contact with each other when printing is done with the size-reduced printing dot of the lengthwise line of the plural dot width (col 9, line 57 – col 10, line 61).

With regard to claims 6, 15 and 24, Obata discloses wherein said pattern detecting device further detects whether or not said lengthwise line is a white lengthwise line of a single dot width or less than the single dot width, on a basis of the patterns of the respective multi-value data of the target pixel and the circumferential pixels adjacent thereto in the main scanning direction (col 9, line 57 – col 10, line 61); and said printing device performs the printing operation with further small printing dot of the white lengthwise line detected by said pattern detecting device (col 9, line 57 – col 10, line 61; col 14, line 63 – col 15, line 11; col 15, lines 31-42; col 20, lines 11-27).

With regard to claims 7, 16 and 25, Obata discloses wherein said pattern detecting device is provided with plural pattern detecting sections (pattern detectors 53a, 53b, 55a, 55b) for detecting different patterns (col 11, line 48 – col 13, line 14); and

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one of said plural pattern detecting sections to be operated can be selected (col 11, line 48 – col 13, line 14).

With regard to claims 8, 17 and 26, Obata discloses wherein said pattern detecting device and said printing device create code data including data representing whether or not the data coincide with plural patterns and density data of the target pixel (col 11, line 48 – col 13, line 14); and the size of the printing dot is changed by converting the data obtained by decoding the code data to the light-emitting data (col 13, lines 17-27).

With regard to claims 9, 18 and 27, Obata discloses wherein said pattern detecting device and said printing device generate code data including data representing coincidence or non-coincidence with the plural patterns and density data of the target pixel (col 9, line 57 – col 10, line 61; col 14; line 63 – col 15, line 11; col 15, lines 31-42; col 20, lines 11-27); the specified code data are generated in the case of coinciding with the specified pattern among the plural patterns (col 11, line 48 – col 13, line 14); and the data obtained by decoding the code data are converted to the light-emitting data and thereby the size of the printing dot is changed (col 13, lines 17-27).

With regard to claim 28, all of the limitations are met by the rejections above.

With regard to claims 29, 30 and 31 Obata discloses an image forming apparatus (digital copier 1), comprising: a pattern detecting device (pattern detection unit 50) configured to detect whether or not a pattern is constructed with a white line of a single dot width on a basis of a pattern of respective multi-value data of a target pixel and circumferential pixels adjacent thereto in a main scanning direction (col 6, lines 53-64);

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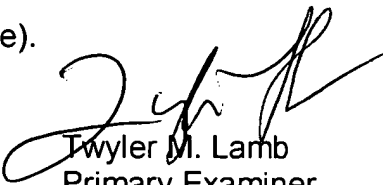
and a printing device (optical writing unit 80) configured to perform a printing operation with a smaller printing dot of the white line of the single dot width detected by said pattern detecting device (col 9, line 57 – col 10, line 4; col 14; line 63 – col 15, line 11; col 15, lines 31-42; col 20, lines 11-27).

With regard to claim 32, all of the limitations are met by the rejections above.

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Twyler M. Lamb whose telephone number is 571-272-7406. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon, Tues and Thurs 6:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Edward L. Coles can be reached on 571-272-7402. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Twyler M. Lamb
Primary Examiner
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